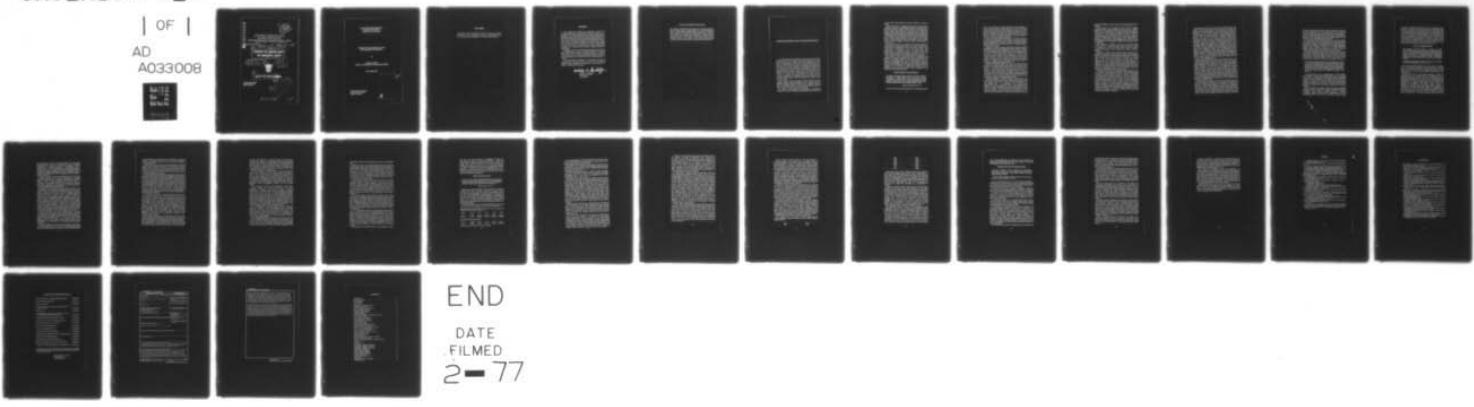


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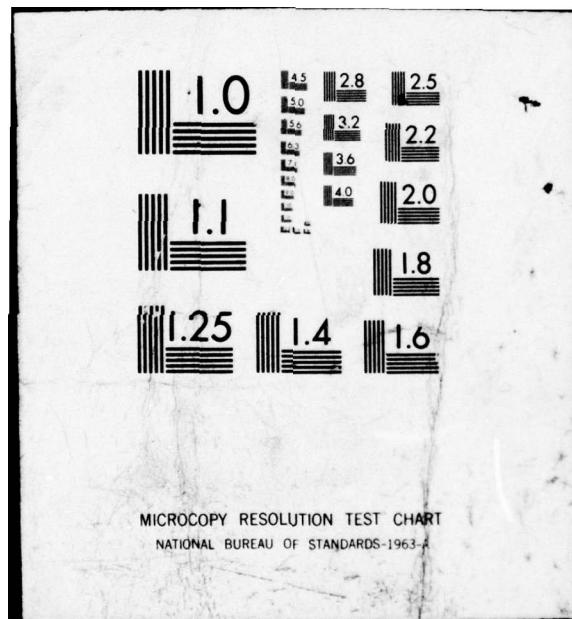
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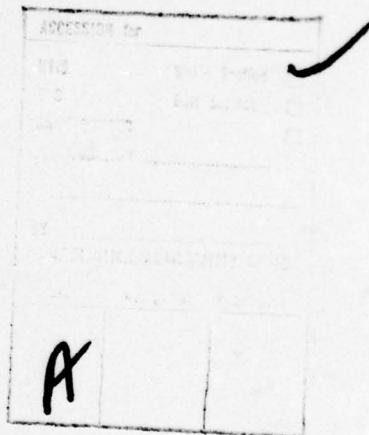
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**THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS:  
THE INDO-SOVIET TREATY**

**by**

**Archer K. Blood  
Deputy Commandant for International Affairs**

**9 November 1976**



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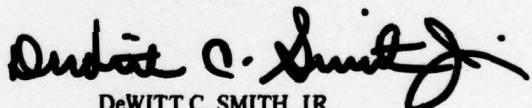
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## FOREWORD

This memorandum considers the motivations of the 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty partners and finds that they were divergent but not incompatible. The author maintains that the Soviets saw the treaty as a diplomatic riposte to the US move to improve relations with China, and that, because the implicit US pledge of support against China was no longer valid, the Indians could look only to the Soviet Union to restrain China in event of a clash with Pakistan. He concludes that the treaty has not converted India into a Soviet ally, let alone a Soviet satellite, and should not distress the United States as long as India remains determined not to be locked into any exclusive arrangement against the United States.

The Military Issues Research Memoranda program of the US Army War College provides a means for timely dissemination of analytical papers which are not necessarily constrained by format or conformity with institutional policy. These memoranda are prepared on subjects of current importance in areas related to the author's professional work or interests.

This memorandum was prepared as a contribution to the field of national security research and study. As such, it does not reflect the official view of the College, the Department of State, Department of Defense, or Department of the Army.



DeWITT C. SMITH, JR.  
Major General, USA  
Commandant

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

MR. ARCHER K. BLOOD, Deputy Commandant for International Affairs, US Army War College, entered the Foreign Service in 1947 and has served in Greece, Germany, Algeria, Pakistan (Bangladesh), Afghanistan, and the State Department. Before coming to the US Army War College in March 1974, he was Acting Director of Personnel and Deputy Director General of the Foreign Service. Mr. Blood graduated from the University of Virginia with a bachelor's degree in economics and has a master's degree in international affairs from George Washington University. He is a graduate of the US Army War College. Several of his articles on South Asian affairs have been published in professional journals.

### THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS: THE INDO-SOVIET TREATY

An old Bengali folk story tells how a farmer found a mirror while harvesting the rice in his paddy fields. Never having seen a mirror before, he was surprised to behold a man's face looking at him from the glass. He thought the face was that of his father who had died some years ago, and he spent many happy hours talking to his image. Soon the farmer's wife became suspicious of the husband's behavior, and went searching in the water jar where he had hidden the mirror. Upon seeing her face in the mirror, she leaped to the conclusion that her husband had married another woman whom he kept secretly in the water jar. A terrific row erupted between the couple, with the confusion heightened by the clustering of relatives and neighbors about the mirror which began to reflect the images of two, three or more persons at a time.

Like a mirror, a treaty can reflect not only substance but also thoughts, prejudices, fears, and aspirations. Like a mirror, a treaty can reflect the background images of friends, foes, or neighbors who loom large in the concerns of one or both of the treaty partners. And, like a mirror, a treaty can either portray or distort reality.

An attempt to pass through the looking glass into the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 may not bring the same adventures and rewards as fell

to Alice. But the effort should be worth the candle for a couple of reasons.

The bare-bone facts surrounding the conclusion of the treaty and its immediate ramifications are sufficiently dramatic to be almost the only justification necessary. Against the background of the intensifying crisis in East Pakistan which threatened to bring India into conflict with Pakistan, and coincident with the startling impact of the announcement of President Nixon's impending visit to Peking, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko flew to India, shortly after a visit to the Soviet Union of D. P. Dhar, a special emissary of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Within 24 hours of Gromyko's arrival in New Delhi, a treaty was signed by him and India's Minister of External Affairs, Swaran Singh, on August 9, 1971.

The treaty came into force on August 18, 1971, after ratification by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on August 13 and ratification by the Indian Cabinet on the same day it was signed. Four months later, on December 16, 1971, the Indian Army, aided substantially by the diplomatic support of the Soviet Union in the United Nations, accepted the surrender of Pakistani forces in East Pakistan and the independent state of Bangladesh came into being.

The passage of time can sometimes give new significance and meaning to such historic political events, and it could therefore be useful to take a longer range look at the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 through a multifaceted prism: that is, the motivations of the two partners; the relationship of the treaty to other treaties concluded in the same general time frame by the Soviet Union and India; the treaty's meaning in the continuum of Indo-Soviet relations; and, the significance of the state of Indo-Soviet relations symbolized by the treaty for US interests in South Asia.

#### MOTIVATIONS OF THE PARTNERS

The draft of the Indo-Soviet Treaty had lain for two years in a drawer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union. After the announcement of Nixon's visit to China, the Soviet Union hastily concluded this treaty with India. Its aim is to realize Brezhnev's "Asian Collective Security System," which is directed against the countries to which Russia is hostile. But this aim is probably difficult to realize.

Chou-en-lai, November 20, 1971<sup>1</sup>

Here is Chou-en-lai at his most scrutable. The 2 year gestation of the

treaty was confirmed by Swaran Singh, then Indian Minister of External Affairs, during the parliamentary debate on the treaty. Singh said that the treaty had been in the making for 2 years and that secret talks had taken place at various levels.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps discussions on a draft treaty were initiated by the Soviets in February 1969 as a countermove when D. P. Dhar, then Indian Ambassador to Moscow, raised the question of Soviet arms supplies to Pakistan.

In any event it seems clear that the initiative lay with the Soviets and that the first Soviet feelers were put forward not long after Secretary Brezhnev suggested the need to create a system of collective security in Asia during his speech at the World Conference of Communist Parties in Moscow on June 8, 1969.

Brezhnev's proposal was vague and lacking in substance, perhaps purposefully so. In an article published in *Izvestia* on May 29, 1969, 10 days before Brezhnev spoke, Vikenty Matveyev warned that a possible American withdrawal from Indochina and the British withdrawal from east of Suez could stimulate Chinese designs on a number of Asian countries. Matveyev argued that the withdrawal of foreign forces "should pave the way for the laying of the foundation of collective security, in which case the countries that have gained their freedom would, by pooling efforts, consolidate peace and repulse all machinations of imperialist expansionist forces."<sup>3</sup>

Despite repeated Soviet assertions that the Asian collective security proposal was not directed against any country, most Asian observers read into it a definite animus against Peking. The Chinese certainly thought so. They denounced the Brezhnev proposal roundly as, for example: "The so-called 'system of collective security in Asia' is nothing more than an anti-China military alliance. It is another frenzied step taken by Soviet revisionism in its collusion with US imperialism in recent years to rig up a ring of encirclement around China and to make war clamours and threats of aggression against China."<sup>4</sup>

Obviously unwilling to be enlisted formally in any Soviet-sponsored anti-Chinese coalition, those Asian countries, including India, which were sounded by the Soviets remained politely noncommittal, with India limiting itself to an endorsement of the corollary Soviet suggestion for economic cooperation. Thus it seems reasonable to infer that the Soviet Union originally proposed treaty negotiations with India within the context of the Asian collective security proposal, and that India was reluctant to push ahead with the negotiations out of a concern that the conclusion of a treaty with the Soviets at that time

would be universally viewed as a first step in the implementation of the proposal.

Two years later, in the summer of 1971, the two countries, particularly India, found themselves confronted with a radically different set of circumstances. Two events in particular pushed the Soviet Union and India, albeit for unidentical reasons, into suddenly concluding the treaty negotiations which had been carried out intermittently and leisurely since 1969. The first was Dr. Kissinger's mission to Peking in the second week in July, followed by the announcement of a follow-on visit by President Nixon. The second was the developing crisis in East Pakistan which threatened the peace of the subcontinent.

Scant material is available in the way of Soviet official pronouncements or writings concerning Soviet motivations in rushing to conclude the treaty with India. There has been, however, considerable discussion of Soviet motivations by Indian and Western analysts.

Borrowing a dualism from economics, Soviet motivations can usefully be examined on both the macro-strategic and micro-strategic levels. In Pan-Asian terms a friendly India, formally linked to the Soviet Union through a treaty, would further the Soviet goal of containing China or, in other words, constitute a forward step in the implementation of the Asian collective security scheme. Moreover, the dramatic US move to improve relations with China signified the beginning of a complex triangular relationship among the Soviet Union, China and the United States, and may well have spurred the Soviet Union into a diplomatic riposte of its own designed to improve its position vis-a-vis both China and the United States.

In the narrower terms of the dangerously unstable situation in the subcontinent the treaty could serve a variety of Soviet goals, depending on how the actual situation developed. A formal tie with India, providing for mutual consultation, could (a) warn and restrain China from intervening on the side of Pakistan in the event of hostilities between India and Pakistan; (b) serve notice to the United States that the Soviet Union was not likely to remain neutral in a Pak-Indian conflict, as it had in 1965, and could offset US actions in the United Nations to prevent an outcome injurious to Pakistan; and (c) exert pressure on Pakistan toward some sort of a political accommodation by reducing the prospect of a 1965-style Soviet neutrality. As events turned out, the treaty served the first two purposes very well, but was inoperative with respect to the third.

Naturally enough, none of these motives was explicitly stated in the official Soviet pronouncements at the time of the signing and ratification of the treaty. Much was said of friendship and cooperation between the Soviet Union and India and their mutual interest in preserving peace on the Asian continent. One quite tangential motive was put forward by Boris Ponomarev, a candidate member of the Politburo and chief of the Central Committee's International Department, during his report to the Presidium in connection with the ratification of the treaty. Ponomarev emphasized the prominent role of the treaty "against the background of the aggressive policy of US imperialism which is continuing its dirty war against the heroic peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia," and expressed confidence that "the treaty we have signed will help the heroic struggle of Indo-China's patriots."<sup>5</sup> It is difficult to fathom what precise application to the Vietnam situation Ponomarev had in mind unless he was signaling an Indian undertaking to broaden its diplomatic relations with Hanoi. On January 7, 1972, to the discomfort of the United States, India and North Vietnam raised their respective diplomatic missions from the consular to the ambassadorial level.

Indian motives paralleled the Soviet motives with respect to China and the United States, but were focused more closely on the situation in East Pakistan and the consequent threat of a clash with Pakistan. Indian policymakers were troubled by the changing US relationship to China. Obviously, if President Nixon was attempting to improve relations with China as part of his global diplomacy, he would be reluctant to pursue policies irritating to China or unfavorable to China's close ally, Pakistan. Some Indian writers, such as Jagdish Bhagwati, maintain that Dr. Kissinger, while visiting New Delhi just before his secret trip to Peking, told Indian officials that if India became involved in a war with Pakistan and China intervened in behalf of Pakistan, India would not automatically get American help as she had during the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962.<sup>6</sup>

Ever since the 1962 border conflict with China, India had enjoyed a more or less implicit US pledge of support against China. The United States had rushed military supplies to India while the fighting was under way. A Joint Commonwealth/US Air Defense Mission had visited India in early 1963 to examine with the Indian Air Force the problems of organizing an effective air defense against the possibility of any further Chinese attacks. Subsequently the United States had provided military and economic assistance specifically designed to help India

build its defenses against the threat of Chinese aggression. In the wake of China's explosion of its first nuclear device in 1964, President Johnson obviously had India in mind when he promised US support to any country which came under the threat of Chinese nuclear blackmail. During the 1965 Pak-Indian War the United States joined with the Soviet Union in warning China against intervention.

In the summer of 1971, faced with the loss of US support against China, India could look only to the Soviet Union to restrain China and, thus indirectly, Pakistan. In pursuing this approach India could be said to follow the teachings of 3rd Century B. C. political philosopher, Kautilya, who is sometimes referred to as the Indian Machiavelli. Kautilya defined enemies as countries on the frontier of your own country, and friends as countries on the frontier of your enemy.

Of course, the principal reason why the Indian political world so preponderantly welcomed the Indo-Soviet Treaty was in the hope that Soviet support would help India to achieve a quick and favorable resolution of the crisis in East Pakistan. "The Times of India" put the point thusly in an editorial on the day after the signing of the treaty:

The treaty will be judged, especially in view of the circumstances in which it has been signed, primarily by one yardstick. Whatever their reservations the people of India will welcome it if it permits New Delhi to extend all-out support to the Mukti Bahini undeterred by fear of aggression by Pakistan with or without China's connivance, encouragement and support. By the same token they will be sorely disappointed if it turned out that the pact has not visibly increased the Government's capacity to act decisively.<sup>7</sup>

In this hope India was not to be disappointed. As the East Pakistan crisis deepened, Soviet pronouncements shifted from an essentially neutral stance to endorsement of the Indian position. Consultations between India and the Soviet Union commenced in late October, 1971, pursuant to Article IX of the treaty. The flow of Soviet military supplies was increased. Once war broke out, repeated Soviet vetoes in the Security Council blocked US efforts to secure an early UN-backed cease-fire.

Just as it takes two to tango, it takes at least two, technically speaking, to conclude a treaty. Yet a treaty, being a political document as distinct from a technical agreement on trade or scientific cooperation, involves more than the engagements of the two contracting parties to each other. It also conveys an implicit message

from them to significant third parties. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko as much as said so during his report to the Presidium when the treaty was ratified. Gromyko said the treaty "has already struck roots in present-day international relations as an important link thereof. No one can now pattern his policy-whether it be towards the Soviet Union or India-without reckoning with this treaty."<sup>8</sup> Analysis of the motivations of the contracting parties reveals that it took more than two to make the Indo-Soviet Treaty. It took five-India and the Soviet Union, China, the United States, and Pakistan. And of the three involuntary partners, China was clearly the most important.

#### TEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

The Government welcomes this treaty as a further step towards strengthening friendship and cooperation between India and the Soviet Union. . . . It is not aimed against any third country. In fact, we hope this treaty will provide a pattern for similar treaties between India and other countries in this region. . . . It strengthens our policy of non-alignment, support for which is expressly mentioned in the treaty. . . . Our policy of non-alignment is a dynamic policy which can be adapted to these changing situations.

Swaran Singh, Indian Minister of External Affairs, speaking to Lok Sabha (lower house of Indian parliament) August 9, 1971.<sup>9</sup>

Even as the unwritten messages of the treaty reflect the divergent but not incompatible motivations of the treaty partners, so does the agreed text of the document offer insights into what each of the partners considers the most important aspects and limitations of their relationship.

On the Indian side, it was absolutely essential to proclaim the unsullied honor of the cherished policy of nonalignment. This was particularly important since the treaty was the first political treaty which India had concluded with a great power. Most Indians believe nonalignment has played a helpful role both in protecting Indian interests and in lessening international tensions between the superpowers. Expanding on the flexible quality ascribed to nonalignment by Swaran Singh, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said in the course of her speech to the National Press Club in Washington on November 5, 1971 that the policy of nonalignment guides us "to judge each international issue on its own merits, not because the United States is supporting it or the USSR or anybody else. We like to see

these things from our point of view and in the light of our own national interests and also, of course, of world peace."<sup>10</sup> Taken in this light, nonalignment is essentially an assertion of independence. From a Western point of view, nonalignment is increasingly becoming a meaningless concept, what with some 80 nations, including Cuba and North Korea, claiming membership among the "nonaligned." Still, it is important that India perceives itself as nonaligned and seeks formally to identify itself as such.

Indian concern that the treaty relationship with the Soviet Union not impinge adversely on the policy of nonalignment is explicitly gratified in Article IV of the treaty. This article, *inter alia*, states "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics respects India's policy of nonalignment and reaffirms that this policy constitutes an important factor in the maintenance of universal peace and international security and in the lessening of tensions in the world."

Moreover, with few exceptions, Indian freedom of action is not circumscribed by the wording of the operative articles of the treaty. In Article V, India and the Soviet Union have merely agreed to "maintain regular contacts with each other on major international problems affecting the interests of both the states." It would be difficult to construe Article V as stipulating a general obligation to consult. The second sentence of Article IX does impose a specific obligation on both parties to consult immediately with each other in the event of either party being subjected to an attack or a threat thereof, but no obligation to take joint action following such consultations is mentioned. This sentence of Article IX helped to satisfy a very important Indian concern at the time the treaty was signed; namely, that the promise of close and effective Soviet cooperation with India would serve to inhibit the Chinese, the Pakistanis, and, to a lesser degree, the Americans.

The first sentence of Article IX stipulates that "each High Contracting Party undertakes to abstain from providing any assistance to any third party that engages in armed conflict with the other Party." This provision would appear to affect the Soviet Union more than India simply because the Soviet Union is in a better position to offer assistance. In effect this provision had the practical consequence in the Indo-Pakistani war of December 1971 of stopping all Soviet assistance to Pakistan.

The second sentence of Article VIII is more specific, enjoining each party from allowing the use of its territory for committing any act that may cause military damage to the other party. This clause would appear

to preclude India from providing air, naval or military communication facilities to the United States or China—a most unlikely possibility in any foreseeable future.

Another restriction is the ban in the first sentence of Article VIII against each of the parties entering into or participating in any military alliance directed against the other party. Since India's policy of nonalignment would militate against India's participation in a military pact, except perhaps in an in extremis situation, this restriction would not appear to weigh heavily on India.

One authority on international law has maintained that a significant safeguard for India against the danger of possible misuse of the treaty in the interest of Soviet great power politics is built into the treaty in the form of the interpretation clause in Article XII.<sup>11</sup> This final article of the treaty provides that any difference of interpretation of the treaty will be settled bilaterally by peaceful means in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding. The emphasis on bilateralism could be pertinent only if the Soviet Union should ever be able to organize some of the states of South Asia and East Asia into a Soviet-dominated constellation comparable to East Europe, where friendship treaties, as the Czechoslovak example shows, can be interpreted multilaterally by Soviet-dominated conferences.

A comparison of the texts of the Indo-Soviet Treaty and the two other treaties concluded by the Soviet Union within the span of 10 months shows that India received more circumspect treatment than did either Egypt or Iraq. For example, the alliance ban clauses in the Soviet-Egyptian Treaty signed May 27, 1971 and in the Soviet-Iraqi Treaty signed April 9, 1972 go beyond the simple ban on military alliances in the Indo-Soviet Treaty to prohibit participation in any groupings directed against the other party. In situations threatening peace, the obligation for mutual consultations in the Soviet-Egyptian and Soviet-Iraqi Treaties specifically states that the mutual consultations will have the object of "concerting" or "agreeing" on the positions of the partners. In the Indo-Soviet Treaty this precise statement of goal is missing.

Moreover, there is no attempt in the Indo-Soviet Treaty to link India with the Socialist international system. Article II of the Soviet-Egyptian Treaty defines Egypt as a Socialist state in the making by referring to it as a country which has "set for itself the aim of reconstructing society along Socialist lines." The Soviet-Iraqi Treaty, while not mentioning any nascent Socialist tendency of Iraq, does say in Article II that the

two states will undertake "to cooperate closely and at all times to guarantee the conditions for maintaining and further developing the social-economic achievements of their peoples." The Indo-Soviet Treaty employs neither of these formulations. Instead, the preamble of the treaty emphasizes the distinction between India and the Soviet Union by referring to peaceful coexistence and cooperation between states with different political and social systems.

Since the conclusion of its treaty with the Soviet Union, India has signed only one similar treaty with a regional neighbor. On March 19, 1972 a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was signed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the late Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, then Prime Minister of Bangladesh. The treaty was signed just a week after the departure from Bangladesh of the last of the Indian troops which had helped bring about the collapse of Pakistani rule and the birth of Bangladesh, when Indo-Bangladesh relations were still extremely cordial.

As in the Indo-Soviet Treaty, the Indo-Bangladesh Treaty contains provisions pledging each partner's respect for each other's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; condemning colonialism and racism in all their forms; and undertaking to maintain regular contacts with each other on major international problems affecting the interests of both states. The Indo-Bangladesh Treaty also contains clauses prohibiting either country from entering into a military alliance directed against the other party or giving any assistance to any third party taking part in an armed conflict against the other. The two treaties are also virtually identical in their wording with respect to the undertaking to enter immediately into mutual consultations in the event of an attack or threat of attack against either party.

The Indo-Bangladesh Treaty goes farther than the Indo-Soviet Treaty in one regard. In the Indo-Bangladesh Treaty each partner undertakes "not to allow the use of its territory for any act which might constitute a threat to the other's security." The wording of the comparable clause in the Indo-Soviet Treaty is "not to allow the use of its territory for committing any act that may cause military damage to the other high contracting party."

The Indo-Bangladesh Treaty also differs from the Indo-Soviet Treaty in that it contains a provision for joint studies and joint action in the fields of flood control, river basin development, and the development of hydro-electric power and irrigation. This provision is not surprising because the principal issue with India inherited by Bangladesh from

East Pakistan is that of the utilization of the rivers of the Gangetic basin.

Shifting the thrust of our textual interpretation to Soviet interests, the most salient conclusion is that the Soviet Union was successful in so positioning itself that it could render effective support to India, if it chose to do so, but would not automatically have to rally to the assistance of its treaty partner. In the event of hostilities or the threat of hostilities the only undertaking to which the Soviet Union has committed itself is that of immediate mutual consultation. Unlike the Soviet-Egyptian Treaty, the Indo-Soviet Treaty contains no provision for cooperation in the military field.

Under the terms of the Indo-Soviet Treaty, the Soviet Union retains virtually complete freedom of action. In the event of another Sino-Indian conflict or another Pak-Indian conflict the Soviet Union would not automatically have to become involved on the side of India. The treaty does not contain a mutual assistance clause nor have the treaty partners taken on any obligation to provide military assistance to each other. They have merely agreed not to take any action to cause military damage to the other or to provide assistance to an enemy of each other.

The operative clauses of the Indo-Soviet Treaty stand in sharp contrast to the compulsive language of the mutual assistance treaties into which the Soviet Union has entered with its Warsaw Pact partners. For example, the 20-year Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Soviet Union and Romania, signed on July 7, 1970, binds each party, in the event of an armed attack on the other, to render the attacked party "every kind of assistance with all the means at its disposal, including armed force necessary for repelling the armed attack."

Nor do the operative clauses of the Indo-Soviet Treaty imply as strong a commitment as do the corresponding clauses in the mutual defense treaties concluded by the United States with Asian nations, which are all similar in content and wording. In the treaty with South Korea, for example, the parties undertake to consult together at the threat of, or in the event of, an external armed attack, to maintain and develop means to deter such an attack and, recognizing that an attack on either would be dangerous to the peace and security of both, to act to meet the common danger in accordance with their constitutional processes.

The wording of the Indo-Soviet Treaty, routine though it may be,

also serves the Soviet purpose of establishing a formal and comprehensive foundation for expanded cooperation in such areas as trade, transport, science, education, culture, and the media. Very possibly, this aspect may turn out to be the most important consequence of the treaty over the long run, coming in time to eclipse the treaty's role within the context of the Bangladesh crisis of 1971. Certainly not a military pact, not even a mutual defense treaty, the Indo-Soviet Treaty is in truth well defined by its actual title: a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation.

#### INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS

This treaty not only seals what has been achieved thus far but also opens up prospects for the further strengthening of the sincere friendship and neighborly relations between the two peace-loving states and signifies a transition to a higher stage of fruitful cooperation between them.

*Pravda*, August 11, 1971<sup>12</sup>

Admittedly, it would be difficult, as well as arbitrary, to attempt to establish any precise correlation between the existence of the Indo-Soviet Treaty and changes in the depth and breadth of Indo-Soviet ties. Still, a rough comparison can be attempted, on a pretreaty and posttreaty basis, between such quantifiable indices of cooperation as levels of trade, economic and military assistance in order to establish whether or not the treaty has at least symbolized a transition to a higher stage of cooperation between India and the Soviet Union, as the *Pravda* article claimed.

Indo-Soviet trade has shown a substantial, although not spectacular, increase in recent years, as evidenced in the figures cited below.<sup>13</sup>

**India's Exports to the Soviet Union (in millions of current US dollars, with comparable US figures shown in parentheses)**

1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
221.33 (326.19)	271.45 (274.15)	287.48 (350.64)	367.08 (371.91)	390.12 (402.66)	434.47* (524.57*)

**India's Imports from the Soviet Union**

275.27 (612.84)	164.38 (614.05)	118.11 (562.44)	117.34 (327.76)	159.31 (579.69)	493.15* (838.17*)
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\*Based on six months' data and six months' extrapolation.

The substantial deficits in the Soviet Union's trade account in 1972 and 1973 were designed to allow New Delhi to service its economic and military assistance debt to the Soviet Union.

The relative role of the Soviet Union in Indian foreign trade, both as a market and a source of goods, has been steadily increasing, although the Soviet Union still ranks third, after the United States and Japan, among India's trading partners.

More important than an absolute or relative increase in evaluating the trends in Indo-Soviet trade has been the structural development underpinning and, to some extent, circumscribing the economic relationship between the two countries.

Indo-Soviet trade operates under quite different rules than those governing India's trade with free trading, capitalist industrial countries such as the United States and Japan. First of all, all commercial transactions between India and the Soviet Union are covered by comprehensive nonconvertible currency payment arrangements. Any currency balances accumulated can only be used to buy goods and services from the other country. Secondly, the Soviet Union accepts payment in Indian goods for the assistance afforded India in such projects as steel plants and oil and gas field development. These considerations, taken together, mean that India, while saving convertible foreign exchange, gains from its trade with the Soviet Union only if it can obtain the categories and quantities of goods it needs at prices which are roughly competitive with those which it would have to pay in the open market and only if it cannot get more for its exports elsewhere.

All this requires a great deal of coordination between the Indian and Soviet Governments to ensure that the composition of trade meets the needs of each trading partner. This coordination is achieved primarily through economic agreements and trade protocols which set target figures for the overall trade turnover, as well as specify those categories of goods, and often their quantities, which each country agrees to supply to the other.

In view of its labor shortage the Soviet Union has generally tried to import labor-saving machinery or equipment or labor-intensive consumer goods which can be substituted for Soviet labor-intensive commodities. For its part India has sought to develop a steady market for manufactured goods produced in Indian factories established with Soviet assistance, as well as for traditional Indian exports such as jute goods, footwear, handicrafts and tea. India also seeks to obtain such critically needed commodities as fertilizer, kerosene, and newsprint.

During the month following the signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty, it was decided to establish an Indo-Soviet Joint Commission for Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation. Called formally into being a year later, the Joint Commission has two cochairmen, the Indian Planning Minister and the chairman of the USSR State Committee for Foreign Economic Relations. Negotiations for the 15-year economic and technical agreement signed in late 1973 were largely coordinated by the Joint Commission. The 15-year agreement in effect constitutes a charter for increased Indo-Soviet collaboration not only in trade but also in economic planning.

19  
The difficulties of meshing the goals and operations of the mixed state socialist/private enterprise Indian economy with those of the centrally planned Socialist economy of the Soviet Union have proven to be considerable. The Soviets are not always interested in providing the products desired by the Indians or in assisting with projects which India considers important. Additionally, the need for synchronized planning can over time impose substantial restrictions on India's economic freedom of action. India faces the problem of figuring how to balance the advantages of assured sources of supply and tied markets against the danger of becoming excessively dependent on them. Recently an Indo-Soviet Planning Group has been established and has engaged in joint planning exercises, marking the first time that GOSPLAN, the Soviet Planning Ministry, has participated in such exercises with a nation outside the Soviet Bloc. It would be misleading, however, to claim too much importance thus far for the Planning Group or for the Indo-Soviet Joint Commission. To date these groups have been more significant as symbols of Indo-Soviet friendship than as organs of effective action, but over time they have the potential of becoming transmission belts of Soviet influence.

Another problem which periodically bedevils Indo-Soviet economic cooperation is Soviet manipulation of the rupee/rouble exchange rate in the aid and trade agreements. Unilateral Soviet devaluation of the value of the rupee in terms of the rouble has meant that the rupee credit balances built up in favor of the Soviet Union can be used to acquire Indian goods more cheaply and that the Soviets can resell some of the Indian goods abroad for hard currencies. One writer has maintained that the Indian payoff for Soviet diplomatic support in the Bangladesh crisis of 1971 has occurred through Indian agreement to allow the Soviets to charge more rupees to the rouble than the generally accepted rate would require.<sup>14</sup>

Trends in Soviet economic assistance are even more difficult to measure than shifts in the volume of trade. It is difficult to draw a meaningful distinction between Soviet trade and aid because sometimes Soviet equipment for a project is supplied under a trade plan rather than as project aid, and because the Soviet Union commits itself to accepting repayment in goods for its project assistance. One fact that is clear is that over the years the magnitude of Soviet economic assistance, no matter how defined, has been a fraction of the total external assistance provided by the United States and other Western nations. One source estimates that Soviet economic assistance over the period 1954-74 averaged US \$84 million a year, while US economic assistance (defined as official concessional aid for development purposes, as agreed in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Office of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)) averaged US \$306 million a year for the period 1946-74.<sup>15</sup>

Except for a one-shot two million ton wheat loan in 1973, the trend line of Soviet economic assistance to India has remained relatively flat in recent years. Nothing like a quantum jump in Soviet economic assistance has occurred since 1971. Indeed, over the last several years it is estimated that India's debt repayments to the Soviet Union in the form of exports have exceeded its drawdowns on Soviet credits. Even now, with US assistance to India limited to the provision of food grains under Title I and II of Public Law 480, our aid, about \$200 million in Fiscal Year 1975, is still larger than that of the Soviet Union.

Soviet military assistance to India is difficult to measure. Estimates of international arms transactions are generally rough approximations because more often than not it is in the interests of both supplier and recipient to cloud the amounts and types of military equipment being transferred. Indo-Soviet military supply transactions are, in the main, carried out under the same barter arrangements which characterize Indo-Soviet trade, and it may therefore be assumed that at least to some extent the importation of military equipment has either been disguised in trade statistics or simply not recorded. Nevertheless, it is possible to deduce a rough order of magnitude and trends.

The following table is an estimate of overall Indian imports of military equipment, expressed in millions of current dollars, during the period 1963-73.<sup>16</sup>

1963	189.0
1964	127.0

1965	136.0
1966	278.0
1967	101.0
1968	168.0
1969	142.0
1970	100.0
1971	235.0
1972	205.0
1973	180.0

These figures show a direct correlation with the three conflicts in which India was engaged during this period. Thus, the large figure for 1962 reflects the 1962 border clash with China, while the sharp increases in 1966 and again in 1971 are attributable to the 1965 and 1971 wars with Pakistan. For the present purpose it is noteworthy that Indian imports of military equipment began to decline after 1971 and that the Indian government has, since 1971, reemphasized its determination to make India self-sufficient in the production of weapons.

India's total receipts of military equipment from all external sources during the period 1964-73 have been estimated at \$1,697 million (expressed in current dollars). Of this the Soviet Union is reckoned to have accounted for \$1,273 million or approximately 75 percent.<sup>17</sup> It can be assumed that this proportion has been roughly constant during this time frame. US military assistance was concentrated in the period 1962-65, but in overall terms the US proportion (5 percent) was negligible. Since 1971 India has continued to procure military equipment from non-Soviet sources such as France, the United Kingdom, and Czechoslovakia. It would thus appear that the Soviet Union, while continuing to be India's principal foreign source of military equipment, has not stepped up deliveries after 1971.

The Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 was not the beginning of a new relationship. The treaty was not followed by any sudden and sustained considerable increase in economic and military transactions, nor for that matter by any real diminution of India's freedom of political action. Yet the treaty was not just the result of a transitory coincidence of interests on the part of the two nations involved. It rests on a cooperative relationship dating back to the mid-1950's and a general commonality of interests growing out of such interrelated factors as the Sino-Indian controversy, the Sino-Soviet split, and the US opening to China. Should the strategic constellation based on these interrelated

factors change significantly, the Indo-Soviet Treaty could prove as ephemeral as the Soviet-Egyptian Treaty has turned out to be and the Indo-Bangladesh Treaty may come to be.

#### SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE UNITED STATES

We have no problems with and no objection to the Soviet-Indian relationship, for example, or to good relations between India and the Soviet Union any more than we expect them to object to our having improved relations with India.

Alfred L. Atherton, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, September 19, 1974.<sup>18</sup>

Are Mr. Atherton's words, and for that matter this analysis, a Pollyannish way of wishing away a concern by pretending that it does not exist? We often tend to put the best face possible on developments, particularly when there is little we can do about them.

Or, worse yet, are they an attempt to rationalize a diplomatic setback? After all, we have discovered after the debacle in Vietnam that our interests in Indochina were never so great as we had once imagined.

Or, better yet, is Mr. Atherton's assessment the commonsense judgment of a practical man of affairs? Men of affairs tend to expect less and fear less than do publicists who often exaggerate an issue in their attempt to illumine it.

Or, putting the question on a somewhat different plane, was the Indo-Soviet Treaty a price paid by the United States either consciously or unconsciously, but in any event willingly, for the politico-strategic advantages flowing from the opening to China?

It is hoped that the answers to these questions are implicit in the argument. Perhaps the answers will show up more explicitly if we acknowledge straight off that Soviet influence in South Asia, and particularly in India, has increased relative to US influence during the past decade, and then examine the possible constraints on an enhancement of Soviet influence and a further lessening of US influence, again particularly with respect to India. These constraints fall logically into three headings: possible inhibitions against even closer Indo-Soviet political ties, factors tending to cushion a further adverse swing of the pendulum of US-Indian relations, and, finally, India's own needs and aspirations.

The Indo-Soviet cooperative relationship derives in part from their

mutually held attitude of confrontation with China. Assuredly, Moscow hopes eventually for a normalization of relations with Peking, and that normalization, if and when it occurs, would decrease India's value to the Soviet Union. Conversely, any determined initiative by India to improve its relations with China would most probably impose strains on the Indo-Soviet relationship.

In the days before the Sino-Soviet split surfaced, it was said on the subcontinent that India's need for Soviet support was greater than her need for US support because only the Soviet Union was in a position to exercise any constructive influence over India's potential enemy, China. Such an assertion was overdrawn but it did contain a kernel of truth which might someday have some applicability to the emerging US-Chinese relationship. In other words, India might find the United States of some help in building a bridge to more friendly relations with China.

But more solid grounds can be advanced for a potentially more understanding relationship between India and the United States. The United States has recognized India's preponderant position of strength on the subcontinent and has no quarrel with this preponderancy if it is not used to threaten the territorial integrity of India's regional neighbors. The United States seems to be moving closer to the Indian view, as put by a perceptive writer on Indian affairs, that the present stable military imbalance between India and Pakistan is more likely to lessen the threat of conflict than the pre-1971 unstable military balance.<sup>19</sup>

Inasmuch as India's principal economic problem for the foreseeable future will be that of providing food for its expanding population, India will undoubtedly continue to look to the United States for large quantities of food grains at better than world commercial prices. India may turn once more to the United States for large-scale technical assistance in improving agricultural productivity, an area in which the Soviet record is notoriously poor. Also, India and the United States have a shared interest in fending off economic collapse and potential extremist insurgency in Bangladesh, and India cannot afford to provide sufficient aid on its own.

Thus, a relatively detached US interest in the affairs of the subcontinent might turn out to be harmonious with India's view of itself as the preponderant regional power and one which seeks to assert itself against external influences in the subcontinent and the Indian Ocean.

Strategic considerations, as well as trade and developmental needs, should continue as factors working for close Indo-Soviet cooperation. Yet India's need for Soviet military equipment and the assurance of Soviet support vis-a-vis Pakistan has been diminishing in light of the expanding Indian military production base and in the wake of Pakistan's defeat in the December 1971 war.

The strongest force working to ensure the maintenance of a "proper" distance from the Soviet Union is, however, India's aspiration to rise above the rank of a middle power. This aspiration and its obverse side, Indian national pride, account as much as any other reason for India's diplomatic refusal to date to endorse Brezhnev's Asian collective security scheme. It may also explain in part India's sporadic attempts to reach a somewhat improved relationship with the United States. In short, India seems determined to pursue its own national interests, and not to play second fiddle in someone else's orchestra.

The Indo-Soviet Treaty retains value as a symbol of this close Indo-Soviet link. But the treaty has not converted India into a Soviet ally, let alone a Soviet satellite, and should not distress the United States as long as India remains determined not to be locked into any exclusive arrangement directed against us.

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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) Two events in particular pushed the Soviet Union and India into concluding a treaty in August 1971: (1) Dr. Kissinger's mission to Peking and (2) the developing crisis in East Pakistan. The Soviets saw the Treaty as a diplomatic riposte to the US move to improve relations with China. Because the implicit US pledge of support against China was no longer valid, the Indians could look only to the Soviet Union to restrain China in the event of a clash with Pakistan. (cont on p 1473B)		

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With few exceptions, Indian freedom of action is not circumscribed by the wording of the operative articles of the Treaty. The Soviet Union was successful in so positioning itself that it could render effective support to India, if it chose to do so, but would not automatically have to rally to the assistance of its treaty partner in the event of another Sino-Indian conflict or another Pak-Indian conflict. The treaty partners have not taken on any obligation to provide military assistance to each other; they have merely agreed not to take any action to cause military damage to the other or to provide assistance to an enemy of each other.

A comparison on a pre-treaty and post-treaty basis, between such quantifiable indices of cooperation as levels of trade, economic and military assistance reveals that Indo-Soviet trade has shown a substantial, although not spectacular, increase in recent years, that nothing like a quantum jump in Soviet economic assistance has occurred since 1971; and that the Soviet Union, while continuing to be India's principal foreign source of military equipment, has not stepped up deliveries after 1971. The Treaty has not converted India into a Soviet ally, let alone a Soviet satellite, and should not distress the United States as long as India remains determined not to be locked into any exclusive arrangement against the United States.

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